

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Cook called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**ROLL CALL:** Council members present: Mary Welcome; Bill Slinkard; Tim Sievers; John Snyder; Jim Fielder; Katie Cooper. Staff present: City Administrator Kyle Dixon; Deputy Clerk Ann Thompson; Police Chief Jerry Neumann; Officer Joel Anderson; Public Works Supt. Mike Wolf.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of February 9, 2021. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:** Supt. Wolf submitted a written report. Additionally, the following M&R issues were reported:

- Had a water leak on 8<sup>th</sup> Street service line which has been repaired.
- Have a water leak on a service line at intersection of Church and Fir Streets. We hit the galvanized line with the backhoe yesterday so Roach Construction is coming tomorrow to replace with a poly line.
- The high flow alarm at the Beeson lift station has been going off about twice a day lately. PW washed the lift station this morning but are still experiencing some issues with the alarm. KME is coming tomorrow to replace a portion of the pump that continues to trip the alarm.
- One of the pumps/motors on the snowplow blade is going out.
- The sander has been repaired with a few minor tweaks to work out.
- The 1-ton has a flat tire, getting fixed.

**POLICE REPORT:** Chief Neumann submitted the police log.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

Comments on the results of our wastewater funding application with ECY as discussed at our last meeting were submitted on February 11<sup>th</sup> and we are now awaiting their response.

WSDOT will be scheduling a site visit to replace railroad crossing equipment on West Main Street/Spokane Street this spring. We will also have them look at the retaining wall just north of the RV park as well and discuss some options to restore and enhance that area.

The Citizens Climate Lobby of Palouse will be at our next council meeting to discuss steps that they would like city leaders to take regarding climate change initiatives.

The Dept of Health is reviewing our path to finalize Church and Culton Street water main upgrades. We should be in a position to give TDH direction on next steps in March.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Resolution No. 2021-03 – repealing the act of appointing commissioners to serve on a purported Civil Service Commission (CSC):** To summarize, traditionally Palouse has been a two-person department based on our size and budget; however, in 2008 Palouse entered into an agreement with Garfield for a joint department with three full-time officers which then required a CSC. However, we have discovered that our CSC was never established through an enactment of council legislation which thereby means the commissioners had no authority to act on civil service matters. Fast-forward to March 2020 when we discontinued our contract with Garfield and returned back to a two-man department, which means the requirement for a CSC ceased. Thus, there is no longer a need for a CSC and this resolution clarifies both points.

While there was intent, the management and operation of the CSC hasn't really operated in conjunction with or had good dialogue with the council to any degree. At this point in time, the resolution is really about addressing an issue of how it came to be. Mayor Cook stated "this is 100% not a means to defund or dissolve our police department". This was technically an issue that wasn't done right in the first place and now we need to address it. He looks at this as an opportunity to reset and move forward. We have an opportunity here to pause and see what makes the best sense for Palouse, garner community-wide input and increase transparency. Council can then make a decision on what's best for Palouse. There are some management pieces that need some addressing.

Chief Neumann and Officer Anderson both want to retain the CSC as some form of protection for the officers. It makes Neumann and Anderson concerned for their future with the city of Palouse PD. Chief wants to recognize what we already have in place and take the steps to enact it properly. Dave Tharp of the CSC pointed out that they

(the CSC) have the best interests of the city and that the policies in place should remain because the CSC is still beneficial, even if the requirement no longer exists. He would offer to resign from CSC if others expressed interest in serving.

Much discussion ensued. Atty Hanson reiterated that since no legislation was enacted by council, the CSC was never properly established and never had any authority to act as such. Councilmember Snyder indicated that if we gave the CSC adjudicatory powers, properly or not, with regard to complaints within the PD, we may have an issue if we're taking a benefit away from our police unless we have something set up to take its place.

No action was taken on the resolution and council will investigate further on how to proceed.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS/REQUESTS:**

Policy & Administration, Chair Cooper-

Policy committee is still looking into how we can best update the solicitor's policy. We're considering having a fee associated with the permitting process.

Policy committee is considering the idea of offering a contractor rate at the RV Park to contractors with an active building permit within the city limits. They would be subject to all the existing rules. City would limit the amount of contractor spaces and the window of availability.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Liquor license renewal for Palouse Caboose. No issues or concerns.

Interview for Council Position # 6: The city had two Palouse residents apply for council position #6: Libby Akin and Ron Weller. Both applicants attested to being registered voters within Whitman County. Both applicants were asked the same set of questions, separately. Council went into executive session at 8:20 pm to review the interviewees. Council reconvened at 8:30 pm. Mayor thanked both applicants. Both did an excellent job. Councilmember Slinkard **MOVED** to appoint Libby Akin to council position #6. Councilmember Cooper seconded. Motion carried.

**ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS:** Councilmember Slinkard inquired about the Jones Truck and Implement bill for DOT Fire Vehicle inspections. Half of this cost is covered by Rural Fire District #4. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** that the bills against the city be allowed. Councilmember Snyder seconded. The motion carried.

The following checks are approved for payment:

Claims Paid    2/23/2021        Ck. #11451-#11468        \$19,107.47

**ADJOURN:** Councilmember Fielder **MOVED** to adjourn. Councilmember Welcome seconded. The motion carried. The council meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_